

Course XI. The History of Elections and Voter Registration I

(1 1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

Antiquity to the Modern Era

One of the best ways to understand how we arrived at today's democracy is to understand the events that led up to the creation of democratic governments. Even though the first democracies existed 400 years before the time of Christ, they disappeared after only a short period in history. What steps led to the creation of the American democracy? When were elections first held? When did the concept of voter registration first appear? How have elections evolved? How have changing election and registration laws and procedures changed democracy? As elections/registration officials, if we understand how and why we arrived at the current form of democracy, then we can better advise the public, the news media and elected officials on proposed changes, or special protections built into current laws or procedures.

This course takes you through the original Greek Democracy and the Roman Republic when democracy disappears altogether. It picks up with the actions of monarchs which lead to incremental steps from their subjects toward establishing a "free people" concept. This course ranges from approximately 600 B.C. to roughly the 1600s A.D. in the American colonies. A pattern emerges that will help voter registrars and elections administrators understand the how and why our democracy evolved the way it did.

Understanding the evolution of the democratic process is an important key in the preservation of our republic and the improvement of democracy for free people everywhere.